

# Coup in Allied Joint Command

## New Junta Cannot Stop Axis Victories

by Tom Tanner, AP (Axis Press)

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With little warning or fanfare former ADM Dave Vogtman was stripped of command of the Allied Fleet after Wednesday's "Night of Long Knives" and a new military coalition attempted to stem the tide of Axis advance. In renewed fighting today, Axis forces continued to deliver devastating onslaughts against the Allied Fleet with several elite vessels sunk.

Following the defeat of the Allied night squadron Wednesday night, sources say senior officers of the Allied Joint Command boarded the flagship USS North Carolina and requested the resignation of ADM Dave Vogtman. Demoted, CAPT Vogtman was allowed to retain command of the NORTH CAROLINA.

A new Grand Alliance between the New England Dreadnought Flotilla and the North Atlantic Battle Squadron installed a joint ruling junta reported led by the leaders of those organizations, CAPT Don Fisher and CAPT Bob Pottle. Press reports out of the Allied camp report morale is low, especially on the newly named Island Requesting Axis Conquest (IRAC), with desertion rates among Allied seamen at their highest since the war began and food and drink being offered to Axis captains who dock there.

The unstable coalition cannot be helped by the significant Axis victories at sea today. In a morning clash of the two fleets, the former Allied admiral lost control and took out his frustrations on the newly commissioned SMS SCHARNHORST (KKPT Dan Sumner) (2-0-0). The NC, running at full speed, ran over the rookie captain's ship only minutes into the battle and sank the hapless cruiser, a crime for which CAPT Vogtman was severely penalized by the international courts. In addition, the Axis Fleet inflicted its own retribution upon the NC (69-16-19), and while the ship survived she was heavily damaged.

In other first sortie action, the HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH (CAPT Paul Broring) (8-3-2) was struck by an Axis torpedo and sunk but later recovered. The effectiveness of Axis torpedoes, especially versus the QE class of ships, has been demonstrated again and again during this war and has proved to be a decisive weapon. Now if we can just figure out who has been firing them . . .

Late in the first sortie the Axis flagship, SMS HINDENBURG (ADM Tom Tanner) (37-10-9) was struck in the forward magazines. The HINDENBURG was engulfed in a cloud of smoke only to emerge mostly unscathed. Most of her shells had already been expended and the source of the smoke was remaining propellant.

As the second sortie opened Axis intelligence, using information gleaned from Tri-Pact Security Agency's BattleStar Management System, determined that command of the Allied Fleet had passed from the NC to the ships USS ARIZONA (CAPT Fisher) and HMS WARSPITE2 (CAPT Pottle). Orders were issued by Axis High Command to target those ships and disrupt any attempts to mount a coordinated engagement. Pursued by the 1<sup>st</sup> Scouting Squadron (SMS HINDENBURG, DERFFLINGER and VON DER TANN) and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle Squadrons (SMS POSEN, KONPRINZ, BADEN, BADEN2 and KuK VIRIBUS UNITIS), the ARIZONA (72-2-4) was severely damaged while KAPT Ken Kelly in the SMS DERFFLINGER (15-7-6) delivered the coup de grâce to the WARSPITE2 (33-6-16). The Axis emerged from the battle victorious once more, the score 8740 to 4045.

With the battle over, both sides enjoyed the hospitality of the people of IRAC, eating a hearty meal knowing that it may be there last. Warships were being repaired, and convoy ships were fitting out and loading. The supplies had to be delivered, and each side was prepping their carriers to force the issue. Once again KAPT Kelly was given command of the Axis Merchant Fleet (and a temporary promotion to Kommodor) with orders to get the ships through no matter the cost. The Axis Clams had to go through.

In the opening moments of the battle two important events occurred. A four-ship squadron of the AMF deployed to sea in an impressive display of Axis power, the first four of 21 successful Axis convoy runs. But the Allies countered with a surge attack upon the Axis Supply Depot. Defended only by the SMS HINDENBURG, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH (CAPT Broring) and HMS WARSPITE (CAPT Marty Hayes) made quick work of several targets. They were rapidly joined by HMS WARSPITE2 (CAPT Pottle) and USS MARYLAND (CAPT Steve Pavlovsky). Within 20 minutes all Axis targets were down and large Axis warships were limited to ammunition onboard or on ships not yet deployed. HINDENBURG immediately attacked the Allied targets, destroying several, then engaged the defending USS NORTH CAROLINA and WARSPITE to allow other Axis vessels to take out the rest of the targets. Determined attacks by the DKM ADMIRAL SCHEER (KDR Barry

Tighe), SMS BADEN (KAPT Matt Moury) and KuK VIRIBUS UNITIS (KAPT Brandon Graham) ensured that all Allied targets were down by the 30 minute mark.

With neither side able to resupply large warships, the advantage lay with the greater number of Axis ships and captains. With four convoy ships on the water at least four warships had been left onshore fully loaded when the targets went down. The DKM GRAF ZEPPELIN under the command of KAPT Dave Tuttle completed 5 runs while KAPT Aiden Kelly made 6 in the captured USS SANTEE. As warship captains came off the water they took over command of convoy ships and allowed the convoy captains to put to sea to interdict Allied shipping. Captains Nate Graham and Bill Garthaffner completed 3 runs each in the commandeered LST while Kommodor Kelly and KKPT Sumner each made 2 runs in the GUISEPPE GARIBALDI.

But the Allies were running their ships hard and fast as well, especially the LIBERTY SHIP of CAPT Fisher and TRADER I of CAPT Hayes. Together with CAPT Broring's TRADER II these ships completed 12 runs under various captains our intelligence have yet to identify, though sources believe most runs were made by their owners. And the Allied cause received a boost when the ADMIRAL SCHEER fell under the guns of the IJN MUSASHI (CAPT Carl Camurati-san) and sank.

Recognizing a need to keep BBs on the water to keep pressure on the enemy, ADM Tanner transferred his flag to the IJN OKINOSHIMA and used the small ship, capable of being reloaded at will, to harass the Allied convoys and warships. SMS BADEN and SMS POSEN (KAPT Garthaffner) performed superbly and demonstrated great fire control while interdicting the two TRADER ships.

As the hour of combat ended both sides collected their scarred ships and retreated to the shelter of the IRAC. And while the battle was close the Axis won the day by the score of 17,800 to 12,000. The crisis had passed and Axis victory in the war seemed assured. But whether the Axis High Seas Fleet was capable of maintaining the momentum would only be known on Friday.